

CIA Balks At Listing Reporters

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Central Intelligence Agency officials, claiming support from some top American news executives, have refused to give the Senate intelligence committee the names of U.S. news organizations and individual journalists that worked with the agency in the past, according to informed sources.

Agency officials passed the word that names would not be released to the Senate committee late last week.

CIA Director George Bush met last Wednesday in New York with executives of CBS and The New York Times and found support for the CIA position of "burying the past," according to sources within the intelligence community and on Capitol Hill.

The committee was told that one news executive said to Bush, "we protect our (news) sources, you protect yours," one source said.

There were, the committee heard, differing views expressed to Bush during his New York trip, according to another source, including some who wanted all the names out to cleanse the profession, and others who

said the CIA "should protect them."

Bush's New York trip, according to one source, was part of a re-examination by the new CIA director of the agency's present use of American journalists and stringers (part-time reporters, usually paid on a piece-work basis) for U.S. publications.

On Wednesday, Bush had an off-the-record luncheon in New York with CBS board chairman William Paley, CBS News president Richard Salant and CBS Evening News managing editor Walter Cronkite.

That same day Bush had an hour-and-a-half off-the-record meeting over coffee with New York Times publisher Arthur O. Sulzberger, Times editorial page editor John Oakes and Times vice president Sydney Gruson.

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The network and newspaper executives believed their remarks, like those of Bush, would not be attributed to them. Nevertheless, by Friday the Senate committee had received word of some support from the Times and CBS for CIA's non-disclosure position.

Sulzberger said yesterday he has known Bush "a long time" and that their discussion was "about a wide range of different things."

He said the Times is seeking under the Freedom of Information Act to find out "whether or not any Times person is now connected" with the CIA. His talk with Bush focused on the agency's future relations with journalists, Sulzberger said. "The past," he maintained, "was not part of our discussion. We did not get that specific."

The Times on Jan. 31 published a story that described attempts by the CIA in 1953 to recruit one of its own newsmen. In the story, a former Times reporter said he had been told by a CIA official that former Times publisher Arthur Hays Sulzberger, the father of the present publisher, had "a working arrangement" with the CIA in which some of the newspaper's reporters working abroad had been on the CIA's payroll.

Sulzberger said yesterday he "did not raise" any questions about that allegation with Bush.

CBS News president Salant refused to discuss the luncheon discussion because it was "off the record and I feel bound by that." Cronkite said yesterday that, as a guest, he would abide by the rules and not discuss the session.

Cronkite added that he feels "terribly strongly" that the names of journalists with past CIA connections should be "put on the table for the protection of those not guilty of such behavior."

According to informed sources, Cronkite was the only person who made a strong pitch to Bush that there should be full disclosure of past CIA connections with journalists and news organizations.

Senate committee staff sources say it now will be up to the full committee how far their request for specific names will be pressed.

A White House source said yesterday the agency's policy of non-disclosure will continue to be supported even if the committee exerts strong pressure to get names.

"The interest of the government goes to the integrity of our guarantee of confidentiality of all agents," this presidential aide said.

All sources contacted agreed that the New York news executives uniformly argued that the CIA should eliminate its practice of using stringers and freelancers for U.S. publications. Their combined position, according to intelligence sources, may influence Bush to issue a regulation barring such use in the future.

The House intelligence committee has been discussing such a prohibition against the use of journalists for cover or as agents, and CIA officials expect the Senate committee will recommend a similar course.

"It could be," one intelligence source said, "that we will have to spend more time justifying them than they are worth."

"The agency is very pragmatic," one official said recently. "If they see that problems from Congress and the press outweigh the advantages (of using American journalists) they might shift."

This source pointed out that in 1973 then CIA Director William E. Colby announced he was halting the practice of the CIA hiring full-time reporters from major publications to act also as part-time covert agents.